

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP KU

SUBJECT: DESALINATION FACT FINDING MISSION

REF: A. USDOC 5716 B. KUWAIT 0385

1. IN TWO SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH MINISTER ELECTRICITY AND WATER ALGHANEM, HE FIRMLY INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT WANT TO RECEIVE MEMBERS OF DESALTING FACT FINDING GROUP. WE FOUND THIS SURPRISING BECAUSE INITIAL DISCUSSIONS EMBOFFS HAD WITH LEADING MIN ELECTRICITY AND WATER DESALINATION EXPERT AHMAD ADASANI LED US BELIEVE VISIT OF FACT FINDING MISSION WOULD BE WELCOME HERE. ADASANI INDICATED MEW INTERESTED IN MOVING AWAY FROM MULTI-STAGE FLASH SYSTEMS INTO NEWER TECHNOLOGIES. HE CITED RECENT TENDER FOR SMALL (350,000 GPD) REVERSE OSMOSIS UNIT AS SMALL STEP IN THIS DIRECTION. ADASANI, HOWEVER, STRESSED RELIABILITY WAS FIRST PRIORITY FOR KUWAITIS AND GOK WOULD NOT BE FIRST TO UTILIZE A SYSTEM.

2. ALGHANEM IS APPARENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT DISCUSSING WATER DESALTING TECHNOLOGY WITH PRIVATE COMPANIES BECAUSE DISCUSSIONS

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ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY OR MAY BEGIN SOON ON A STATE-TO-STATE BASIS

WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN. GOK ALSO COOPERATING WITH BAHRAIN AND UAE. ALGHANEM MENTIONED THAT HE TOLD SANDERSON COMPANY (US) AND KRAFTWERKUNION (GERMAN) THAT HE WOULD NOT DISCUSS WATER DESALTING TECHNOLOGY WITH THEM, RESPECTIVELY, IN CONNECTION WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN. ALGHANEM ADDED THAT MEW IS ITS OWN CONSULTANT AND DOES ITS OWN IN-HOUSE DESIGN WORK FOR SUCH PROJECTS (WHICH WE KNEW), AND MINISTRY IS IN TOUCH WITH WELL KNOWN GROUP OF COMPANIES INCLUDING SEVERAL US FIRMS REGARDING EQUIPMENT FOR AND CONSTRUCTION OF INSTALLATIONS.

3. ALGHANEM'S REMARKS ALSO INDICATED THAT NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY VERY MUCH ON HIS MIND, AND IN THIS AREA, PARTICULARLY, HE WANTS, FOR NOW AT LEAST, TO KEEP ANY DISCUSSIONS ON GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT BASIS. EMBOFF GOT IMPRESSION THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO GET INTO POSITION OF DISCUSSING POSSIBLE NUCLEAR WATER DESALTING PROGRAMS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIVATE FIRMS, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN KUWAIT'S NEAR TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON DESALTED WATER AND ITS EXPERIENCE WITHIN THIS AREA (CAPACITY: 62 MILLION IMP. GPD), WE DISAPPOINTED THAT MINISTER UNWILLING TO RECEIVE GROUP. IT OBVIOUS HIS TECHNICAL PEOPLE WOULD HAVE LIKED OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH GROUP, BUT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS VIS-A-VIS OTHER GULF STATES AND KUWAIT'S INTEREST IN NUCLEAR ENERGY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THE MINISTER'S OVERRIDING CONCERNS. WE WOULD STILL NOTE THAT KUWAIT IS PREPARING TENDER 3-4 PLANTS WITH CAPACITY OF 20 MIL. IMPGPD AT DOHA POWER STATION AND PLAN ANOTHER 3-4 ADDITIONAL PLANTS THERE IN SEVERAL YEARS. NUCLEAR PROGRAM ALREADY MENTIONED. WOULD EXPECT KUWAIT'S TOTAL CAPACITY TO TOP 100 MIL IMPGPD WITHIN FIVE YEARS. IF 3 OR 4 MISSION MEMBERS (AND NO MORE) WISH TO STOP IN KUWAIT TO EXPLORE FORTHCOMING COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES WE CAN TREAT THEM AS ANY OTHER BUSINESSMEN VISITING THE EMBASSY FOR ASSISTANCE AND SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS WITH MEW TECHNICAL OFFICIALS AND OTHERS. STOLTZFUS

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